



POEMS

BY

F. H. Barnes.

*(Authority for the name: -
Mrs. Whitaker, of the Briggs Co.)*

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WILLIAM BRIGGS

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Go forth, my verses, and win friends for me;
Their faces I perchance may never see,
But should my book prove worthy of its claim
There will be some to brighten at my name,
And, turning o'er the leaves, reflect and say,
"These rhymes a pleasure to the mind convey."



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THE PRELUDE

*Across the waste of ice and snow
There sweetly comes to me
The prelude of a song, a low
Arresting harmony,—
The first spring bird is on the way
'Gainst wind of steel, 'neath sky of gray.*

*The crocus hearkens, lifts its head,
The daffodils all stir,
The trees recover of their dread,
The grasses feel the spur
Of April that is not yet here,
Of April's herald singing clear.*

*And beats in unison my heart,
And warmly glows my cheek,
My care-girt prison falls apart.
The world's no longer bleak,
For from a palpitating throat
There flows a song I cannot quote.*



APRIL

The wavering flight of the careless crow,
And his lazy, outdoor call,
The swelling of buds on the poplars slim,
And the warmth beside the wall,
Bring March to the turn of the snowy road,
And the foaming waterfall,
Where April waits, with a sob and a smile,
Modest, fleet-footed and tall,
The light of the waking morn in her eyes,
And a greeting gay for all.

TO THE FIRST HEPATICA

O blossom, born of frost and snow,
And nurtured by the savage blast,
Beneath a frowning sky and low
You bloom as though the storm had cast
A deeper trust upon your face
And given added strength and grace.

Did dreams of temperate April throng
And lend a cheer to wild March days,
Did snatches of the bluebird's song
Float down the winter-guarded ways
And tempt you from your chilly bed
To peer, and then to raise your head?

Do thoughts of timid willow leaves,
And milky fuzz of cherry buds,
The spell the twilight shower weaves,
And hope of noon-tide's sunny floods
Afford a solace in the gusts
Of vagrant snows and sharp sleet-thrusts?

TO THE FIRST HEPATICA

Would I might also learn to wait
In patience and in quietness
Until the angry storms abate,
And smile above my care and stress,
Secure that Joy will follow soon
And change the longest night to noon!

HAPPINESS IN NATURE

(In Answer to a Question.)

You ask the meaning of my happy face
And laughter-rippled voice. Are not the rare
And virgin joys of springtime here, the bare
Trees of the winter months all showing trace
Of leaves to come? Upon a woodland space
Secure from winds I found to-day a spare
And scattered company of flowers, and there
The whitethroat sang from out a heart of grace.

It takes but these to make me glad; I live
Not in the comradeship of men and see
No beauty in the crowded streets. The rain,
The birds, suffice mine ear, the woodlands give
A varying visual feast; to me
There is no higher joy that I can gain.

THE FIRST ROBIN

The trees are gaunt and leafless,
Unpromising the ground,
The wind blows cold and searching,
And still the lake is bound.

Yet, hark! the happy robin,
The messenger of spring,
His notes are blithe and blither,
And sunshine does he bring.

He tells of sprouting verdure,
And dandelion gold,
He prophesies a season
That will delights unfold.

Away with tears and sorrow,
Away with fret and care,
Ruddy robin sings his song
And all the world is fair!

THE ROVER'S SONG

I set my face to the rising sun,
And own the wind my master,
I follow the track of sunbeams spun
With footsteps fast and faster.

I leave behind me the city streets
And the city sights and sounds;
I go in search of freedom's sweets,
And the life unvexed by bounds.

I shall be friend to the wilding birds,
Warden of spruce and the pine,
Interpreter of the water's words,
Support for the trailing vine.

A rover am I till life is spent,
And never will I return
To the narrow walls, where hotly pent,
I have panted and craved to earn

THE ROVER'S SONG

The right to live in the open air,
To gaze on the turquoise sky,
The rain, the dew, and the sun to share
With wood-creatures dumb and shy.

The gipsy passion is in my blood,
The passion for chance and change,
And though I encounter hail and flood,
Afar, afar I must range.

And so to the sun I turn my face,
With the wild wind for my guide;
Happy and hopeful, rapid of pace,
To traverse the whole world wide.

COME BACK, COME BACK TO CANADA

(To a Voluntary Exile.)

Come back, come back to Canada !
The trees are all in leaf,
Stern Winter holds the earth no more
In firm and frosty fief ;
The pasture lands are green again,
The streams are free to flow,
The shadbush, globed with burnished buds,
Has felt the warm wind blow.

Come back, come back to Canada !
The Southland has her charms ;
Her eyes are dark and passionate,
Voluptuous her arms ;
She woos you with her rich perfumes,
With roses and with song,
With golden dreams and languid thoughts,—
Her clasp is close and strong.

COME BACK, COME BACK TO CANADA

Come back, come back to Canada !
The robin calls you home,
The violets are on the hills,
The plough is in the loam ;
This is your native land and mine,
The land to me most dear,—
Come back, come back to Canada,
The winsome Spring is here !

THE WOOD IN JUNE

No other joy so fully thrills and satisfies
My beauty-loving soul as this, the sweet,
Recurring miracle of June. With feet
Forgetful of fatigue I go 'neath skies
Of summer splendor to the wood where lies
A pulsing, perfumed peace, where thrushes greet,
Where columbines and dancing harebells meet,
And wilding roses blush and windflowers rise.

The wind is but a whisper in the trees
That intercept the sunbeams as they seek
The cool dim nooks where ferns and twin-
flowers bide.
The only visitants are birds and bees,
And those of humankind who, proud and weak,
Find Nature with Felicity allied.

THE LAKE OF ME-NE-GAN

It lies like a gem in the heart of the hills;
Its many-hued splendors are flashing unseen;
Unheard is the sound of the silvery rills
That speed to its basin through arches of green.

Its waters lave shores that have never been trod
But by Indian hunters in quest of the deer
That leap from their coverts when morning's abroad,
And fly as their dusky pursuers appear.

Dark spruces mount guard on the ledges and bluffs,
And poplars troop down to the white pebbled
strand;
Secure is the lake from the north wind's rebuffs,
But by southerly breezes ceaselessly fanned.

THE LAKE OF ME-NE-GAN

The loon's curdling cry breaks the stillness by night,
The kingfisher's loud, rattling call marks the day,
The herons wing low o'er the waves blue and bright
Where sunbeams and raindrops alternately play.

It waits in the silence to ravish the eye
Of traveller intrepid, of dreamer and seer,
The gem of the northland, reflecting the sky,
The Lake of Me-ne-gan, the lake without peer.

GIVE ME THE HUES OF THE DAWN

Give me the hues of the dawn,
The voice of the hermit thrush,
The wind that drifts like a swan,
And waters that wildly rush,

The nearness of virile pine,
The whisper of poplar leaves,
The valleys where sun doth shine,
And naught but the rain bereaves.

And I will cheerfully turn
From all that the city holds,
Its gauds, its gold I will spurn,
For the wide unbroken wolds.

My soul shall breathe and expand,
My heart shall lighten and leap;
I will be one with the land
And its friendship I will keep.

THE PRISONED MOON

The moon is low in the purple sky
And peers through the barring pines,
Like prisoner pale whose hopes are high
Though Morning will bring the word to die,
For the Dawn her warrant signs.

THE YEARS BETWEEN

Each day I see her falter forth
To breathe the noon-tide air,
The woman worn and white with years
And weight of pain and care,
And at her side there lightly goes
A child with flaxen hair.

She leads the woman by the hand
Along the sheltered lane
Where maples arch their graceful boughs
Beneath the sun and rain,
And flowers strew the grassy banks
With lavish fragrant stain.

The woman fails to mark the scene,
The warmth she only feels;
The child with chastened happiness
Finds every charm appeals,
But covert glances at the dame
No kindred joy reveals.

THE YEARS BETWEEN

And as she walks her youthful mind
Is busy with the years,
She wonders if the robin's song
Will ever fail her ears,
And if her eyes will miss the rose
When its bright face appears.

IF I MIGHT CHOOSE

If I might be at liberty to choose
My lot in life, I gladly would refuse
The garish wealth of cities, the swift round
Of Fashion's pleasures, and the ceaseless sound
Of human tongues. My choice would be the calm
And smiling country with its grateful balm
Of clover meadows, leafy trees and streams.
To live thus tranquilly, with amber gleams
Of sunlight on my hands and head, the song
Of thrushes in mine ear, and all the throng
Of colors on the sky at morn and eve
Is one of many dreams I daily weave.

MY GARDEN

My garden fronts the south, and breezes stray
From that sweet quarter o'er its loveliness;
It is the one spot where I find from stress
Relief and mild content. There all the day
The golden sunbeams on the lilacs play,
The roses breathe of love, and ferns express
Pervasive peace, while honeysuckles dress
The old stone wall with leaves and blossoms gay.

Each year, unfailingly, the birds come back,
The robins, orioles and wrens, to nest
In their old haunts and gladden me with song;
And as I delve and plant, nor feel the lack
Of human friends, I know that I am blest.
For in my garden life is pure and strong.

MOON RAIN

When daylight flits between the hills,
The emerald portals of the west,
And Night the pulse of Labor stills,
And brain and hand claim welcome rest,

With upturned face I meet the rain
Of moon's cool crystal on the earth,
And feel my soul washed clean of stain,
Restored to pristine strength and worth.

THE WILD ROSEBUD

It lay in the dust of the city street
Fragrant and fresh and fair,
A symbol of peace in the blurring beat
Of traffic centred there.

But the day wore on and the parching sun
Shrivalled the petals pure,
And the life of the wild rosebud was done
Save for the perfume lure;

Sweetly it rose on the evening air,
Haunting and warm and rich,
Like the last long breath of a fervent prayer
Keyed to a lofty pitch.

THE PRESENT GOOD

Reflect on sorrow? No, not I;
While shines the sun in cloudless sky,
While birds descant and flowers bloom
I have no time for thoughts of gloom.

The beauty of the world is vast,
And though I know it cannot last,
I take enjoyment while I can,
Refuse to credit words of ban.

Let him who likes prate of decay,
His words shall never me dismay;
I will not spoil the present good
By any pessimistic mood.

THE CITY DWELLER SPEAKS

The past is calling me across the world of fevered
care
To break away from bondage and of summer have
my share,
To feel the sun upon my hands, the grass beneath my
feet,
And in the songs of robins hear the pulse of nature
beat.

Too long have I existed in the city's barren bounds,
The sallow slave of Commerce and the hunted of the
hounds;
The brand of Trade is on me, and the rush is in my
brain
Of maddened speculation and the lust of easy gain.

A sudden wish convulses me to visit my old haunts,
To feel again if possible the same old boyish wants,
To idle all the morning by some smooth trout-
harbored pool,
And feel the old delights of lazy leisure after school.

THE CITY DWELLER SPEAKS

To forage in the orchard for the first of ripened fruit,
The rapids in the river as of yore succeed to shoot,
To lie amid the grasses in the drowsy heat of noon
And listen to the tale the bees above the clover croon.

To feel that all of life is mine and all of life is good,
Unvexed by dull forebodings to calamities construed.
To live but in the present, with the hope sometimes
expressed

That the future may to me bring no stirrings of
unrest.

The past is calling me to-day, the past of home and
youth,

And I can bear no longer now the city's scorching
drouth;

The region where the air is pure, and days serenely
slow,

Exerts the old magnetic spell, and back again I go.

LOVE'S LOOK

No more I walk in glad content,
For Love encountered me,
As on my humble way I went,
Nor thought him e'er to see.

He spoke no fond, entreating word,
He cherished not my hand,
But his deep look my spirit stirred,
And made me silent stand.

A look so masterful, so sweet,
I ne'er had felt before;
I marvelled that I could it meet,
As yet its strength I bore.

A moment, and he turned away,
And I alone was left,
And now I fret from day to day,
And am of peace bereft.

THE SAILOR'S WIFE SPEAKS

The flush of day still lingers on
The purple twilight sky,
The last sweet bird's full-throated song
Upon the air doth lie,
And from the hollow of the hills
The white moon rideth high.

Around my casement clings the rose,
Its fragrant flowers furred,
Each blade of grass upon the lea
With cooling dew is pearled,
The peace of night is settling on
The June-anointed world.

I think of thee, my absent Love,
I think of thee at sea,
Besieged by storms, and swept by winds
Farther away from me,
And from my heart I frame a wish—
That I might be with thee.

THE SAILOR'S WIFE SPEAKS

The perfect beauty of the night
Is darkened to mine eye,
Instead I see the tossing sea,
Its perils I descry,
And to its rage the swollen clouds
Make thunderous reply.

This night with its sweet scents and sounds
Seems but to mock my woe;
How can I rest, how can I sleep,
Unless I of thee know,
Shall I e'er see thy face again
In spite of winds that blow?

Ah, Heaven, pity sailors' wives,
Look down and pity me,
Give me security and trust
And may I patient be,
And from the dangers that I dread
Bring back my Love to me.

IF I COULD KNOW

If I could know your heart was still my own,
And that your thoughts and hopes converged to
mine,

I should not in my loneliness repine.
If I could know your bonds had dearer grown
With every month that has forever flown,
My haunting fears should speedily decline,
And Love's pure, precious flame would brighter
shine,
And Happiness for Misery atone.

Then breathe some word to cheer me, and the winds
Will bear it over sea and over plain.
And I shall cease to murmur and to moan.
I can be brave to wait if meeting finds
Affection and blind trust were not in vain,
And that your heart was, and is still, my own.

IN SUSPENSE

A thousand fears perplex me,
A thousand hopes delude ;
I wait and watch and wonder
With doubt and faith imbued.

Shall it be, or shall it not,
And have I long to wait ?
My pulses beat but faster
Although the hour is late.

I cannot rest a moment,
I cannot find a book
To rivet my attention,—
I may not choose but look.

I stand beside the window,
My face against the pane,
Intent upon the glimmer
Of lamplight through the rain.

IN SUSPENSE

The elements are hostile
This night of dismal length,
The fiercest winds of heaven
Have put forth giant strength,

And casements creak and rattle
Insistently and loud,
And ancient trees are swaying
By midnight terrors cowed.

The streets are all deserted,
And mine's the only light;
Beyond, the lake in fury,
Rebels against the night

That early has descended
And wrapped the world in gloom
A gloom that even enters
This warm and cheerful room.

But do I hear a clatter
Of distant, hasty hoofs?
Or is it but the falling
Of torrents on the roofs?

And do I hear a rider
Incite his jaded steed,
Or troll a lusty chorus
To cheer himself in need?

IN SUSPENSE

I try to still the tumult
 Within my troubled breast,
I try to pierce the clamor,
 My hands are tightly pressed,—

Not yet! Not yet! Oh, hasten,
 My trusted messenger,
Bring me tidings, good or ill,
 Rest not, nor spare the spur!

THE WAYFARER SPEAKS

I pause a moment in the heat, and pray
For needed strength to bear me on the way
That stretches wide and burning to the end
Where shadows beckon, and the balsams send
Their fragrant messages to me. I pray
For sunset, when I may forget the gray
And rigid face that Duty wears, forget
The discords and the pangs of life, and, met
Again by those who left me far behind
Upon the road, I hearken to the wind
Attuned to their mild tones, and fill my hand
With blossoms that bud not in this drear land.

THE ASTRONOMER

The midnight sky his eager eye surveys,
And he is blind to beauties of the earth,
Forgetful even of his cheerful hearth.
The prospect of the heavens holds his gaze;
Antares and Arcturus as they blaze
Perplex him while he ponders on their birth,
And through the telescope the stately girth
Of planetary bodies on him weighs.

He is unconscious how the hours speed,
But watches till the east begins to glow,
And thinks on those who gave posterity
The knowledge that by him is prized indeed,
Herschel, Hipparchus, and Galileo,—
Three mighty masters of astronomy.

THE BLIND MAN TO HIS WIFE

You say the sky is clearing after rain,
And that upon the west there is a stain
Of sunset splendor ere the twilight wane.

The crescent moon is visible, and Mars
Is glowing in the east, but yet no stars;
The moving canopy of cloud debars.

The wind that blew so furiously all day
Has slackened, and will soon have died away:
The dripping willow trees have ceased to sway.

All this I see, and through your loving eyes;
My helplessness I almost might despise
If you did not such kindness exercise.

The tenants of our garden-plot, the birds,
Have finished vesper-song, and silence girds
Their sleep, but music modulates your words.

THE BLIND MAN TO HIS WIFE

Your vivid phrases touch me with delight,
Illuminating my unvaried night,
And saving me from brooding on my plight.

Come near and place in mine your helpful hand;
How swiftly you respond to my demand,
For your affection has my blindness spanned.

My wife, I cannot speak what I have felt
When with my great infirmity you dealt
So gently, that to you I could have knelt.

How desolate and lonely should I be
If you were not an angel unto me,
Almost persuading me that I can see!

BY THE SEA

The clear moon rides the height of heaven and pours
A flood of silver on the quiet sea
And slumber-prisoned land ; in the south three
Scintillant stars watch midnight's dusky doors,
And through the cool and freshening air up soars
A steady breeze from off the low, salt lea ;
Deserted is the pebbly beach, and free
Am I to seek the pillow that restores.

But sleep will not come to mine eyes. I hear
The gentle lapping of the waves upon
The sand, like haunting voices of the dead,
And kneel, companioned by remembrance dear
Until the moon is dimmed, and the bright dawn
Transforms the silver of the sea to red.

THE STOIC HEART

Though Disappointment chill my heart,
And fondest hopes at length mislead,
Though Hate let fly his poisoned dart,
And Friendship fail me in my need,
I would not let the world discern
The secret fires that in me burn.

I know that I must bear alone
The misadventures of my life,
That I must hush the coward moan
When storms calamitous are rife,
And call to aid my native pride
When those who know me not deride.

I feel 'tis reprobate to show
The tokens of distress and dread,
And yet my confidence is low,
And bowed in terror is my head,—
It would be well for me if I
Were only privileged to die.

THE STOIC HEART

I long to drop this formal mask
Of studied, calm indifference,
To ply no more my thankless task,
Nor fabricate my own defence,
To feel the ruthless hand of Death
Crush out regret and wish and breath.

LOVE'S LOYALTY

Speak not to me of other hearts or other hopes;
Amid the past my spirit ever gropes.

Each morning robes the world in wondrous light,
But she I loved has faded from my sight.

Noontide brings wealth of color and perfume,
But her young beauty ne'er for me will bloom.

When star-gemmed night the world in silence steeps,
I feel that she forever deeply sleeps.

In her I lived, and now that she is gone,
My heart and all my hopes to her are drawn.

That glancing sunbeam on the lilac there
Is of the same bright color as her hair.

The violets that in the spring arise
Are reminiscent of her truthful eyes.

LOVE'S LOYALTY

When Maytime comes and all the birds rejoice,
I hunger for the accents of her voice.

The joyous thrilling of the youthful year
Brings back the thought of her, to me so dear.

I wander in the paths we used to tread,
But by a mocking recollection led.

I view again the well-remembered scenes,
And learn what Death's cold separation means.

To the mild solace of a book I turn,
And for her fond companionship I yearn.

All things to me of her sweet person tell,
And can I such a memory expel?

Speak not of other hearts or other hopes:
For my lost Love my spirit ever gropes.

IN PRAISE OF BOOKS

Here are the friends that never change,
That dwindling fortunes not estrange,
That wear no false deceiving mask
Nor ever costly favors ask.

That yield to all who seek to find
Strength and refreshment for the mind,
A rich reward of truth and cheer,
A remedy for every fear;

That charm alike the child and man,
The lengthy years between them span,
And diverse natures animate
With noble thought and purpose great;

That when all other pleasures lose
Their force to interest and amuse

IN PRAISE OF BOOKS

Retain the powers of their prime,
Diminished not by flight of time.

These books of mine are friends that grow
More dear as others come and go,
Good comrades and associates
Through life's most melancholy straits.

THE ORGANIST

His fingers from the ivory keys
Draw melody divine;
Upon his countenance is peace
And majesty benign.

An overture of triumph rolls
Along the lofty nave,
A clarion to halting souls.
A summons to the brave.

Anon, he plays a tender strain,
Some plaintive harmony,
That strikes the heart with sudden pain,
And sense of misery.

Not his—he dwells too near his God
To soil himself with sin;

THE ORGANIST

What knows he of deliberate fraud?
His life is pure within.

. His art exalts him to a plane
Where he becomes a seer,
And earthly strife and earthly gain
Seem worthless of a tear.

TO AN ENEMY

You were too fond and clinging to be kind,
Too ready with your honeyed smile and tone
To merit all my trust. You were, I own,
A pleasant comrade by the way, but blind
I was not to your growing hope to find
Me clay within your skilful hands; unknown
I scrutinized your selfish heart, but stone
I was to arts of your designing mind.

Beneath the smile I saw the snare, and now,
Because I showed by careless word I did,
You pass me silent by. What's that to me?
The pain with which you meant to sear my brow
But scars your own, and pales your lip, and 'mid
Your gaieties the goad of Grief I see.

IN PANOPLY OF PRIDE

What though my heart unhappy be,
And doubts assail my mind,
Life's careless jesters shall not see
The grief that tinges all for me
With poison undefined.

Let Pride restore to countenance
The gay and gracious smile,
And let me join the mazy dance
As though I ne'er had snapped a lance
With Fate, who won by wile.

Upon the field of my defeat
Let me a palace rear,
For festival and revel meet,
Where Melody the hours fleet
May garnish and endear.

IN PANOPLY OF PRIDE

The halls bedecked with rose and vine
Shall ring with laugh and song,
And Mirth herself shall pour the wine
For those who at my board may dine,—
The lovely and the strong.

Apart, my scalding tears may flow
And sighs may heave my breast ;
Yet few shall guess, and none shall know
That in the lyric, perfumed glow
I am most sore distressed.

NO FORGIVENESS

All day I labor and try to forget
The merciless ache at my heart ; with song
I cover the petulant words that throng
To my quivering pain-blanchèd lips, the fret
That might lurk in my tones ; mine eyes grow wet
And hot with the brimming tears which I long
To shed ; in secret I writhe at the wrong
I committed, and the uncanceled debt.

O heed my cries ! Forgive ! I cry, as night
Drops sable curtains on the day, and sighs
May issue from the heart without reproof.
But ever from my own are turned the bright
True eyes I dimmed with grief ; my choking cries
Come back to me ; the loved face is aloof.

A REVELATION

She told her bitter tale, and I
Could proffer word nor aid,
But stood compassionately by
And held her shaking hand and wept,—
Like one who heavily has slept
And wakes to see his visions fade,
And all his noon-day turned to shade,
At thought of sorrows she had kept
Concealed with smiling lip and eye.

IN WAITING

Not less, but more I think on thee
Who art so far away from me,
And eagerly reunion wait,
Thy coming home anticipate.

Each day the ocean's bound I scan,
The fair soft winds my longings fan,
And not a vessel I descry
But sets my pulses beating high.

The storms that strew with wrecks the coast—
Thy bark ne'er be among the host !—
Strike terror to my hoping heart ;
For thee the apprehensive start,

For thee petitions leave my lips,
For thee, for all at sea in ships ;
Ah, none can know the fears of life
So truly as a sailor's wife.

IN WAITING

Before another tide comes in,
Before the new moon, sickle-thin,
Hangs o'er the west at set of sun
Shalt thou be here, beloved one?

I nightly dream thou hast returned.
And wake to weep the joy adjourned.
Yet in thy presence all forgot
Will be the pangs of anxious thought.

THE LADY OF THE PORTRAIT

The Lady of the Portrait sits and dreams,
And on her beauty how the moonlight gleams,
Caressing oval face and curling hair,
Revealing throat and dimpled shoulders bare.

Her dark-lashed eyes, so candid and so blue,
Are winsome for expression as for hue;
Her mobile lips, just parted in a smile,
Are ready with some sweet word to beguile.

She sits expectant, as though one were near
Who loved her well and who to her was dear;
She muses on his coming, and her hand
Toys with the letter that she just has scanned.

—O Lady of the Portrait, did you live,
And to the world your benediction give,
Or were you but a vision in the night
To him who woke and painted his delight?

SLEEP—AND THE AWA KENT

The moonlight silvered all my little room
And hid its loneliness. I sunk to sleep
And straightway gracious dreams began to steep
My weary brain, and rid my heart of gloom.
I dreamed that I was loved, and that the bloom
Of happiness o'erspread my life, to weep
No more the office of mine eyes, and deep
My agony was buried in a tomb.

Then with a start I woke, and cold Despair
Smiled mockingly beside the hearth where lay
The ashes of the past ; against the pane
Beat fast the wind and chilling sleet, and there
Were no soft hopes to cheer me on my way
And help me my sad burden to sustain.

FALL OF THE YEAR

Temptations strong assail me
To leave this round of care,
To wander with the wild wind
Wherever it would fare :

To meadow and to upland
Where sunbeams warmly lie,
And goldenrod and asters
Autumnal frosts defy ;

To rocky slope and hill-top,
To harebell-haunted height,
To waterfall secluded,
To road that curves from sight.

The yellow poplars beckon,
The burning sumach waves,—
And hark ! the wind is calling
Adown the woodland naves !

Then let me snap the fetters
That bind me to my task,
And feel the sense of freedom—
'Tis all that I would ask.

THE GIPSY

The dark-eyed Autumn comes again
With tingling airs and cloudless skies,
And brings the happy season when
A glamor on the landscape lies,
And plenty gladdens hearts of men.

Her face is rich with ruddy tints
And warm with kisses of the sun;
Of merry laughter there are hints
Around her wayward mouth, but none
Of melancholy's baleful prints.

Her dusky tresses ripple free,
And scarlet leafage binds her brow;
Her supple hands retain in fee
The blush of Spring, the Summer's vow,
She of the harvest holds the key.

She strays o'er all the pleasant earth,
Gay melodies upon her lips;
A gipsy she for change and mirth,
And colors gay in which she dips
Her brush without a thought of dearth.

THE GIPSY

She turns the forests' sombre green
To hues fantastic, flaunting, fair;
Each wayside thicket is a screen
Whereon she paints to haply dare
If earth can match the sunset scene.

The cornfields laugh when she is near
And proudly wave their plumes of gold;
And throngs of harvesters appear
To reap the promise of the mould,
Unquickened when the spring was drear.

The vineyard and the orchard yield
Abundant fruitage and to spare;
From overflowing croft and field
Come sounds that thankfulness declare
When Autumn's bounty is revealed.

Knee-deep this gipsy do I find
In asters and in goldenrod;
Around her pirouettes the wind,
And over the prolific sod
She breathes an incantation kind.

IN AUTUMN RAIN

The rain of autumn swift descends,
The clouds are low and grey,
The moaning wind with torrent blends,
And thought of coming winter lends
More gloom unto the day.

And yet the air is warm and bland
As though the time were spring;
And from the thinning trees a band
Of sturdy robins, summer-clanned,
Most joyously do sing.

AN OCTOBER PICTURE

The trees stand still in the translucent air,
Mute captives of October's witching smile,
As o'er the throbbing earth, long mile on mile,
She casts a glamor colorful and fair.
The hardy autumn flowers strew the bare,
Brown, turfy slopes, where Summer's ardent wile
Failed to invoke the slimmer blooms fragile,
And all the hilltops purple vapors wear.

The rowan fruit hangs heavily and low,
A shining crimson in the golden light
That wraps the whole earth like a sunny cloak;
And in the thicket where the thorn trees grow
A robin warbles brokenly and bright,
Out of the strange new joy October woke.

CHANGE

Yea, it is sad to view
The changing year, the death of summer flowers,
The southward flight of birds, the forest bowers
Denuded of their leaves;
The chill wind grieves
Beneath a clouded sky of ruthful hue.

'Tis sadder still to view
Sin-changed humanity, the blighted flowers
Of love and kindliness, the noble powers
Productive of no sheaves;
The spirit grieves
For lives that are no longer pure and true.

DESPAIR

There is no help for one so lost as I ;
Despair has gripped me with unswerving hand,
And tearless, hopeless, shivering, I stand
Beneath a blackened and a scowling sky.

The road my feet have trod these long dim years
Still stretches out, and I must needs walk on
Towards a goal I cannot reach, a dawn
That never breaks, a grave that ever nears.

The dreary waste of sand torments mine eyes,
The jagged rocks have cut and bruised my feet ;
I reel and tremble in the parching heat
And there is none to hear, to heed my cries.

I grope, I strive to feel, I strain mine ears,
But all that meets my hand is empty air
And piercing thorns, no welcome sound is there
Of voice to lull and dissipate my fears.

DESPAIR

The ghosts of other days around me crowd
With horrid silence and reproachful mien,
But when I look they vanish like the lean
And spectral moon behind the midnight cloud.

I think of careless childhood, happy youth;
Fair scenes rise on my mem'ry one by one;
Forever and forever are they done,
And gone are innocence and early truth.

The wind that sweeps across the barren waste
Brings unto me no coolness, no repose,
But stings me with a pain that ever grows
Until I beg of Death to come with haste.

But still I live ! Without a hope I live !
The prey of Grief and sullen, cold Despair;
My burden presses more than I can bear,
I long for rest oblivion will give.

DO YOU RECALL?

(The Woman Speaks.)

Do you recall how close we came to love,
As close as lay my hand within my glove,
And yet as distant as the sky above ?

A light that dazzled mine was in your eyes,
A light of pleasure and of quick surprise;
My thought was but a hesitant surmise.

You leaned towards me, and a trembling word
I in my sudden agitation heard,—
But both of us know that was all occurred.

So long ago we went our separate ways
It seems as though I should forget that phase
So passing brief, and yet with me it stays.

DO YOU RECALL ?

I have not even yet forgot that we
Were friends as sympathetic as could be,
And that we were from affectation free.

And now we are apart, do you recall
The moment when it seemed that we were all
To each, and how the thought did us appal ?

THE NEARER VIEW

Her beauty lured me from afar
And drew me magnet-wise ;
Her eyes were bright as brightest star,
Azure as August skies.
And bearing, face and form were free of mar.

But when I eagerly advanced
I saw how blank the face,
How vacuous the eyes that glanced,
As, dowered with all grace,
A bubble on the sea of life she danced.

I WAR NO MORE AGAINST MY FATE

I war no more against my fate,
Relinquish both my love and hate,
Suppress my wishes, and forswear
The dreams that held me like a snare.

My destiny was fixed before
The earth its first perfection wore,
And ere the stars their course began,
Or claimed the scrutiny of man.

I count it useless to resist
Decrees by which I now exist,
To try to break the stringent law
That centuries have failed to flaw.

I WAR NO MORE AGAINST MY FATE

As vain it were to bid the tide
Upon the fretted beach abide,
Or seek to chain the wind that sweeps
Across the lofty mountain steeps.

Reluctantly I own defeat,
And scorn myself for my retreat,
Yet since I may not change my state
I war no more, but yield to fate.

THE COMING OF WINTER

I heard the 'plaining of the wind
Through woods bereaved and drear,
The scurry of the timid hare
Alive to every fear,
And over both the muffled voice
Of Winter sounding near.

I felt the shortness of the days
That marked the Autumn's close,
The keen, cold wind full pitiless
That in the northland rose,
The stillness of the starry nights,
The world's death-like repose.

I saw November's ebbing flush
Upon the sunset sky,
The waveless quiet of the lake,
Its summer beauty by,
The furtive lustre of the moon
As cloud-hosts marched on high.

THE COMING OF WINTER

When Morning in the opal east
Her lightsome face did show,
The faded earth of yesterday
Was mantled deep with snow,
And over all the gleaming land
I watched the Winter go.

THE BLIND FIDDLER

He turned his sightless eyes to me
And murmured low, "I cannot see."
Poor, grey old man! bereft, alone,
His every comfort long since flown,
Yet stood he in the market-place
With quiet, not unhappy face,
His fiddle in his knotted hands,
And played to men of many lands.

His tunes were simple, homely, old,
Of humble life they only told;
Of country cottage, children's play,
Of workers mid the fragrant hay,
Of rustic lovers' joys and pains
And twilight rambles in the lanes.
"I do not feel the cold," he said,
"My fiddle will provide me bread."

THE BLIND FIDDLER

But there were few who seemed to see,
And none to mark his melody;
Each passer-by walked on in haste
And scorned on him a glance to waste;
The late November air was chill,
And other thoughts their minds did fill;
The fiddler he was old and grey,
His trembling notes they heard each day.

The autumn waned and winter came
With cold that stung as does the flame.
No more the fiddler aged and blind,
His hesitating way did find
Along the crowded city street;
No more his notes so thin and sweet
Fell on the ears of those who thought
Of him when he at last was not.

BY THE FIRE

I'm all alone to-night, Love,
And sitting by the fire,
Alone with dreams and shadows,
Alone with my desire;
Gaily leaps the vivid flame,
High, and ever higher—
And louder is the heart's call
When sparkles bright the fire.

The throstle has his mate, Love,
The sun regards the flower,
The raindrops kiss the budding leaves
In April's youthful hour;
Nor bird, nor bloom, nor leaflet
But has a happy dower—
And yearns the soul within me
When all the earth's in flower.

BY THE FIRE

The winter world is white, Love,
December shows his power,
But hoar-frost wraps the birches
In every forest bower,
The poplar and the hazel,
The stalwart pines that tower—
Grief-stricken I, and lonely,
I dread December's power.

I'm all alone to-night, Love,
I'm sitting by the fire,
All my thoughts are of your face,
My heart is yours entire;
Lower burns the vivid flame,
And soon it will expire—
Weary 'tis to sit alone
Beside a dying fire !

DECEMBER MORNINGS

A crimson streak on the pallid sky,
And mists that waver and faint,
A wandering breeze that flutters by
Like stifled voice of complaint.

So come the cold December mornings,
Each more tardy than the last,
And only the note of the jay rings
Like a challenge from the past.

A SNOWY DAY

The sky is canopied with cloud
That blurs the distant circling hills,
The long, dim upland valley fills.
And intermittently and loud
The winter wind blows here and there,
And finds no refuge anywhere.

The heavy snowflakes waver down,
A noiseless, eager multitude,
To softly wreath the landscape rude
That withered in November's frown;
And o'er the lake, a stretch of white,
The wagon trail is hid from sight.

A snowy sky, a snowy earth,—
Friends dear and true seem far away
This solitary short-lived day,
And in the heart there is no mirth
To bring a gleam to aching eyes
When shadows loom and daylight dies.

A WISH

All that is best I wish for thee:
A mind from doubt and bias free,
A heart estranged from fear, a will
To wrestle with defeat and ill;

A purpose firm, a standard high,
A vision quickened to descry
The latent good in humankind,
The worth of natures unrefined;

A friend forever staunch, a dream
To charm thee when days darkest seem,
A love of beauty, and the sense
That life will yield its recompense.

A CONFESSION

I grieve that I allow my mind to dwell
On one who never gives a thought to me,
Who does not know that on my bended knee
I pray that he may prosper and be well;
Whose gay and bantering words are as a spell,
And thrill me in the shadow as I see
How wide the gulf that separates may be,
And hear the gladsome songs I cannot swell.

But yet, while feeling that my love is vain,
I know that I am richer for my tears
And for my mental anguish and distress.
Could I have sympathized with others' pain
And understood their sorrows and their fears,
If my experience had taught me less ?

IN AN HOUR OF TRUST

When hearts again are beating fast
At thought of rosy joys to come,
At knowledge Fate will smile at last,
Nor stand aloof, no longer dumb,

Why should the consciousness abide
That after light will come the dark,
That Care can not be long denied,
And tears may quench Love's shining spark ?

Our lives are checked with sun and shade,
And Grief is guardian of our doors;
Her clammy hand we would evade,
Our eye the future oft explores,—

Is this the whole ? is this the end ?
Is earth a universal grave ?
Does Death part ever friend and friend,
And mock the virtuous, the brave ?

IN AN HOUR OF TRUST

But well we know in whom we trust.

We upward look though sight be dim.

One hope is ours through gleam and gust,—

Our final rest in Heaven with Him

Who trod the earth that now we tread.

Our great Example and our Guide.

Who understands our human dread.

And gives us strength as it is tried.

TO A FRIEND

You say that I am cold to you,
And that my pleasantries are few,
No sympathy I manifest
When you are weary and depressed.
—O Friend, you wrong me, and I pen
The words I could not utter when
You looked and spoke your reprimand.
If you my inmost heart had scanned
You would have seen but kindness there.
I felt too deeply to declare
How much I honored you,—and yet
I have occasioned you regret.
Will you forgive and overlook
The proud reserve that would not brook
Departure from convention's rule,
And teach me to subdue and school
My spirit, and to keep my friend
And not again wound or offend ?

OFF QUEBEC

Farewell, my Canada, farewell !
Before I come again to dwell
Within your borders who can say
How far my restless feet shall stray ?

I feel the lure of foreign lands,
The witchery of tropic strands,
And in imagination see
A brilliant mirage fronting me.

My dreams are of an olden time
When crumbling cities had their prime,
And men who left a sounding name
Were in the zenith of their fame ;

When Grecian history was made,
And Egypt no behest obeyed,
But dominated on the Nile
And built her monumental pile ;

When Rome was glorious and great.
And Caesars in imperial state
Exacted homage from the world.
And on their foes their legions hurled.

OFF QUEBEC

But as I view the Attic plain
And muse on Athens' rise and wane,
Or halt with swarthy Arab guide
The Sphinx and pyramids beside,

Shall I not think of home and sigh?
Or when Italian hills are nigh
Reflect that Canada can show
Scenes fair as those to which I go?

Ah, yes, the maple and the pine
Are dearer than the palm and vine
And where the classic waters break
Thoughts of St. Lawrence shall awake

—I see the lights of old Quebec.
The swift descending darkness fleck,
And soon the tidal current bears
Me out to meet the ocean airs.

Farewell, my Canada, farewell!
Departure only serves to swell
My patriotic love and pride,
And force the tear I may not hide.

